

Let's Go O'Carolan

Some Music of Turlough O'Carolan

Introduction:

Turlough O'Carolan was an Irish harper and composer who lived from 1670 to 1738. Blinded by smallpox at around the age of eighteen, he learned to play the harp. He then traveled throughout Ireland the rest of his life, composing songs for his many patrons. Many of O'Carolan's compositions are called "planxties". The Irish word planxty means "a song for".

O'Carolan music was often influenced by Italian Baroque composers. This aspect of his compositions set him apart from other Irish harpers of the day. Much of the work written by his contemporaries has been lost, since it was not written down. We are lucky that O'Carolan's music has survived so we can enjoy listening and playing his music.

In this workshop we will learn to play a few of the old masters tunes. We will talk about the feel of the music and discuss some ideas on how to approach this music on the hammered dulcimer.

Tunes To Learn

- Sheebeg and Sheemore (si'bheg and si'mhor) - The Big Fairy Hill and the Little Fairy Hill – Commemorates a battle between the two fairy hills where the little side won!
- Planxty Fanny Poer (Francis Power); Also called Mrs. Trench – This tune was likely composed for her wedding to Richard Trench.
- Lord Inchiquin – Thought to have been composed in honor of the Forth Earl of Inchiquin who was a descendent of one of the great Irish Chiefs, Baron Inchiquin
- Young Catherine – A song written for a patrons daughter, "Caitríona Ní Néill"

These tunes are all available at:

<http://www.oldmusicproject.com/occ/tunes.html>

The sheet music can be printed out in regular notation or ABC format. A midi version of the song can also be available.

Reverences and Links

<http://www.oldmusicproject.com/OneilsOcarolans.html>

<http://www.contemplator.com/carolan/index.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turlough_O'Carolan#Work

<http://www.celticguitarmusic.com/receipt.htm>

<http://www.contemplator.com/carolan/carolmid.html>

About The Author:

Cliff Cole purchased his first hammered dulcimer in 1985, from Sam Rizzetta. At the time he was playing drums in a blues band. Prior to taking up the dulcimer, he studied drums and percussion for ten years. Cliff has played in numerous rock, blues, jazz, zydeco and folk ensembles since the age of fifteen. Folk instruments are where the heart is...

Cliff plays the hammered dulcimer in the folk group "DayBreak," which has been together since 1989. They have made several recordings, including "Lost Cave" which was recorded live inside of Lost River Caverns in Hellertown, "Little Steps", and "Autumn Calling," which features many of Cliff's original tunes. They also have produced two Christmas CD's one named "Unity; Unique Music for Christmas" and a Christmas CD of a live Concert recorded in December of 2002

DayBreak's music is available on iTunes and many other digital download stores found on the web.

Cliff also plays gigs with his lovely eighteen old daughter, Emily Rose under the name of Glass Rose's. Emily has a strong, beautiful voice, which blends nicely with the dulcimer and guitar. They released a CD called Falling Wings. The CD feature's Emily's voice and some of her original tunes. (She is now a college student so her dad hardly sees her anymore;-)

Cliff's hammered dulcimer was made by James Jones. The full sized 2/16/18/7 instrument covers four octaves and has dampening pedal. For more information about James Jones instruments go to his web site: <http://www.jamesjonesinstruments.com>

Cliff lives with his lovely wife, Pamela, in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. He works as a hardware test engineer for QLogic Corporation, located in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

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For "DayBreak" CD's tapes and bookings contact:

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Or Rob and Anna Lisa Yoder – 215-538-5280

Course Materials can be downloaded from:

<http://www.daybreakfolk.com/CliffCole.htm>